

Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration

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DRAFT STUDY REPORT: FEASIBILITY OF APPROPRIATE METHODS OF
INFORMING CUSTOMERS OF THE CONTENTS OF BOTTLED WATER

Testimony in Opposition to Fluoridation of Bottled Water

April 24, 2000

My name is Melissa Yee and I have worked in the health care profession for fourteen years, including Oriental medicine and acupuncture. I have always attempted to take care of myself to set a good example for those I am helping. I am very concerned about the use of sodium fluoride in toothpaste and other dental products and actively oppose the fluoridation of our drinking water. I have had my share of dental problems and became aware of the dangers of fluoridation about ten years ago. Since then I have studied the effects of sodium fluoride on the brain and bones and would conclude that the majority of our health problems are dentally related. Therefore, I have ceased using fluoride toothpaste which I previously used and carried with me whenever I traveled. I now inform others of the dangers of fluoride because of the risk for fluorosis, even using small amounts of toothpaste everyday. In my opinion, populations are being placed in severe jeopardy of health because of the misinformed advocacy of fluoride-containing products as well as corrosive metals used in dental care.

Because of my concern about the contamination of drinking water, for the past years I have purchased and consumed bottled water. I have become reluctant to drink tap water because of the risk of contaminants such as lead, arsenic and fluoride. When travelling I will exclusively drink bottled water and a limited amount of beverages using boiled water. After residing in foreign countries for extended periods of time, I have been positively tested for giardia and other parasites in the bloodstream which are difficult to eradicate. These parasites have contributed to symptoms such as abdominal and digestive problems, arthritic joint pain and hypothyroidism for which I must take medication.

It is important that we begin to examine the bottling and labeling standards for water, since water has become a precious commodity and lucrative business. At present time bottled water is labeled for fat, carbohydrate and protein content which are irrelevant in declaration of content. It would be more pertinent to list the minerals added to enhance the flavor or already existent at the source. Fluoride, chlorine, chloride and polymers are some of the things presently being added to drinking water, so it would seem more logical to label amounts of minerals and chemicals based upon regular testing of the contents. Carbonated bottled water from Europe is labeled with its mineral content, so other types of bottled water should reveal the contents, listing chloride, lead, arsenic, cadmium as well.

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It is vital for maintenance of health and well-being that humans have access to clean air and clean water. As population increases and land and pure water become more of a premium and rarity, it is important that we preserve the quality of the food and drink we consume to sustain life. People who purchase bottled water are concerned about their health and are willing (or unknowingly duped) to pay \$20 per gallon (Evian water) for a product of high standard. Millions of dollars are being made selling water, and Pepsi Cola and Coca Cola have also begun to cash in on the business. In fact, water companies are already regulating the amount of fluoride being added although fluoride has no known benefit for the body and should be excluded from usage. Forty years of water fluoridation in America have not proven to be effective for the prevention or reduction of dental decay whereas it is more likely the consumption of refined carbohydrates, such as sugar in candies and carbonated drinks, and poor genetics which are the cause of dental caries and periodontal disease.

Because I am concerned about my health and the quality of the water I consume, I strongly oppose adding sodium fluoride to drinking water, including bottled water. Fluoride as found in organic form (calcium fluoride in soil) is acceptable but unfortunately cannot be distinguished from sodium fluoride using present testing methods. Therefore, fluoride in bottled water should be excluded as a toxic heavy metal.

I support the labeling of bottled water to show its composition and any additives and other chemicals present. Please take the time to find a solution which will protect the interests of the health conscious consumers rather than the manufacturers whose intent may be motivated by profit. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Yee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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